

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DoD BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SOCIAL MEDIA OPERATIONS

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

PARTICIPANTS:

Moderator:

WILLIAM SELBY

Guest:

MARILEE FITZGERALD

Director, Department of Defense Education Activity

Other Participants:

ADRIENNE ANDERSON

Bayonet & Saber

STEVE BEARDSLEY

Stars & Stripes

MOLLY BLAKE

Blue Star Families

AMY BUSHATZ

Military.com

TOM GOERING

NavyCS.com

VENITA JENKINS

Fayetteville Observer

KAREN JOWERS

Military Times

JOY RESMOVITZ

Huffington Post

CHUCK SIMMINS

America's North Shore Journal

JAMIE-LYNN SMITH
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NONDICE THURMAN
Fort Campbell Courier

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. SELBY: I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense Blogger's Roundtable for Wednesday, May 22, 2013.

My name again is William Selby with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating the call today. We're honored to have as our guest Department of Defense Education Activity Directory Marilee Fitzgerald to discuss the impacts of furlough on DoD.

A note to everybody on the line, in case you have never been on a call like this before. Please remember to clearly state your name in advance of your question. Please keep your phone on mute if you are not asking a question, and please keep your questions succinct and to the point. We're going to go ahead and take questions in order of how you joined the call, which I've written everybody's name down in order that you joined.

And with that, we can go ahead to Ms. Marilee Fitzgerald for her opening statement.

MS. FITZGERALD: Okay, great. Thanks so much. I wanted to just express a few --- you know, make some opening comments here, and among them are the fact that I joined the Secretary of Defense in expressing deep regrets that any furlough action is necessary at all. We certainly don't underestimate the great financial and emotional strain that a furlough action places on all our employees, and the additional strain that it places on our students and their educational programs. And so, I wanted to ensure that you all had an overall understanding that we have been committed in all that we have done at DoDEA to ensure that we focus our efforts on mitigating the impact of sequestration and furloughs on our students. Educating our students, teaching and learning --- that's our business. And so, any effort that we've made has been dedicated to that guiding principle of minimizing the impact on our children. And through this process, as we plan with the Department of Defense leaders, our goal was to preserve the accreditation of our schools, ensure that we provide a full academic credit for our children, and again, to ensure a quality education for all of our children.

And so, with those opening statements in mind, I'll open it up and be happy to take questions from everyone.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much, ma'am. Jaime-Lynn Smith, you were first on the line.

MS. SMITH: I have no questions at this time.

MR. SELBY: Roger that. Venita Jenkins?

MS. JENKINS: Yes. Venita Jenkins, Fayetteville Observer. Has any decision been made so far regarding furloughs? I attended the last school reading at Fort Bragg and there were still a lot of questions about whether there will be any, and what impact it will have on the schools on Fort Bragg.

MS. FITZGERALD: Yes. There have been some decisions made. The Secretary announced on May 14th that our school level employees --- so this would be our non-month employees who are largely comprised of teachers. They will be taking an up to 5-day furlough. That's different than it is for other DoDEA employees who are not serving at the school level or who are 12-month employees at the school level, and then folks above the school level, like myself, superintendents, and other support personnel. We will be taking up to 11 furlough days.

So, the 5 days --- the up to 5 days at the school level will occur not before September. So, for our parents and for those who want to ensure that everyone gets the right message, school is going to open on time --- and I would follow their school calendars that are posted on each school's website. And the furlough days will be taken largely and almost exclusively in the month of September. Now, the actual dates of those furloughs probably have not been announced in every school. In some they have been, not sure about your community in particular. But a good place to look for information for the exact dates of the furlough would be your school's website.

And certainly, we'll be posting it on the DoDEA website and you can link to it as well.

MR. SELBY: Thank you. Tom Goering, you're next.

MR. GOERING: Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much for the opportunity. My name is Tom Goering, I'm with Navy Cyberspace, or NavyCS.com. I have actually two questions. How much of DoDEA's budget goes for the schools that are located? And secondly, are there any studies underway that perhaps closed some of the canis schools where it makes sense to do so? Take Fort Rucker as an example. I think it opened over 50 years ago, and now within a 10-mile radius of the school there's no less than 10 elementary schools available for students to attend. Does it make sense to possibly look at how our structure is in the U.S., and perhaps reduce the number of schools that we have --- that DoD is in charge of and turn it over to the public school systems that are now sprouting up from the cities around the bases that didn't exist back when we built the schools? Thank you.

MS. FITZGERALD: Sure. To answer your first question, about 30 percent of our budget is dedicated to educating children in the Department of

Defense domestic dependent elementary and secondary schools. And to answer your second question about how we look to these schools as a potential area of cost-savings for the Department. And I'd like to say that the Department periodically through its history --- in fact, I think I've been part of four studies in DoDEA --- has looked to determining whether there is a more cost-effective way of educating children here in the United States. And the most recent study was done about 10 years ago.

Certainly, this comes up as an area of potential focus and study, and I suspect that as we move forward I have to tell you, there'll be no area of the DoDEA budget that will be left un-scrutinized. And so, we will be scrutinizing all efforts. But at the moment, our efforts are focused on providing a quality education in all of the schools. Any decision that the Department makes about whether to continue investing in the education of children in locations overseas or locations stateside are driven by many factors, and financial considerations are just among them.

We have a DoD mission to support. Certainly we're going to look at any impact that these decisions have on our military mission and the impact on our families, impact on the local education agencies, and so on. So there would be a lot of factors that would be considered, but I have to tell you that every area of our budget is being examined to ensure that we are dedicating our resources in these very, very difficult times in supporting the education of our children today.

MR. GOERING: Thank you.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, ma'am. Adrienne Anderson?

MS. ANDERSON: Hi, I'm Adrienne Anderson with the Bayonet and Saber at Fort Benning. The --- excuse me, let me back up. Will the furlough days affect clubs and sports activities in some way?

MS. FITZGERALD: They shouldn't if they occur after school. So, on a furlough day, teachers cannot be present in school. In fact, it's illegal for teachers to work. It's illegal for any employee to work during a furlough day. But the after-school activities, whether they're sporting events or co-curricular activities, like a math club or a homework club, they're fine and they can continue. Again, as long as they continue to start after the normal school day.

MS. ANDERSON: Great, thank you.

MR. SELBY: Thank you. And on to Chuck Simmins.

MR. SIMMINS: Yes. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore

Journal. How many employees fall into the non-month category? And how many in other categories?

MS. FITZGERALD: We have about 11,000 employees in the non-month category, and then the remaining 7,000 or 8,000 employees would be our 11- and 12-month employees.

MR. SIMMINS: Okay, thank you.

MR. SELBY: Amy Bushatz?

MS. BUSHATZ: Hi, this is Amy Bushatz with Military.com. I was hoping that, first of all, you could give us some specific examples of schools who have already announced their furlough days. I'm kind of sitting here while I'm listening clicking through some of the calendars on the DoDEA website for individual schools and I'm, you know, unable to find any that have furlough days. Can you give us an example?

MS. FITZGERALD: I don't think I can. I think it's a bit premature at the moment. We've just delivered the furlough notices --- the advanced notices that propose furlough to our employees beginning on Tuesday. And so, I think what you will see now is our principles working with our teachers, our communities, include our families, and our commands to select the days that provide the least disruption to the educational program.

My sense is that they all have some general idea of what those days are, and they're just now coordinating that. I think the soonest you can expect that to be up on the website would probably be sometime next week.

MS. BUSHATZ: Okay. And I was wondering if you could tell us whether or not these furlough days will be made up? I know, for example, that school systems have snow days that they've scheduled in the calendar that may or may not be school days, depending on whether --- will they be taking any of those days to make up for the furlough days at the end of the school year?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, let's hope there are no snow days, because that will certainly help minimize the academic disruption and the loss of these additional five days. So I'm all hoping and hope you join me, too, in ensuring that we have no weather-related days off. We don't need any more days off next school year unexpectedly.

The schedule is that by our accreditation agency, that we have 183 days that are scheduled for instruction. And we must be in class a minimum of 175 days. So, what you can expect is that these five days of instructional loss that will

occur in the month of September, our teachers will help mitigate that instructional loss at every opportunity they have with their children. So on any regularly scheduled day, you can expect our teachers to weave in the extra academic support and instruction that's required to help our children minimize the loss of instruction because of a furlough day. And that would occur on every single day that we are in school. And we will need the full school year to ensure that that happens.

MS. BUSHATZ: Thank you.

MR. SELBY: And on to Steve Beardsley?

MR. BEARDSLEY: Yeah, hi. Steve Beardsley from Stars & Stripes. When we say "up to five furlough days", will there be exemptions on a case-by-case basis? That is, would some teachers maybe face three, some face five? Or is it possible that the five day figure could be dropped altogether, even lower? Or that it could even be, I guess, no days down the line?

MS. FITZGERALD: The Department's --- as you point out, these furlough days are proposed and teachers and all personnel in DoDEA, as well as throughout the Department, will be given advanced notice of the proposed furloughs, and the employees will be given an opportunity to reply and to present any issues that they believe should be considered in deciding whether or not to take a furlough. So, the deciding officials will have the opportunity to look at individual cases and be able to consider what the employee says vis-a-vis the mission that must be performed and make decisions about the furlough, whether that is a number of hours that somebody might take or the actual number of days.

So, I think it's pretty --- it's possible, you know, to answer your question. It's possible, because deciding officials will have that authority to execute the full range of options with respect to providing --- for relief. But again, I want to highlight that that's in individual employee cases.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Do you know what they'll be looking for exactly? Or what types of cases might merit an exemption?

MS. FITZGERALD: No, I don't, and I would hesitate to speak about that because ---

MR. BEARDSLEY: I mean, is there any guidance, I guess?

MS. FITZGERALD: --- (inaudible) unnecessary influence a deciding

official's decision. So it will be up to them.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Okay. One question real quick. Do you have a figure on how much money the potential five-day furloughs would save DoD?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, if you hang on, I have somebody here who will go verify it. I think I have that number but I don't want to give it to you and be wrong. But somebody just popped out of the room, you heard the door close. So standby and we'll get back to you with that answer.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Okay.

MS. HOLD: Ma'am, this is Leslie Hold. If we can't get that during this call, Mr. Selby can help us to get it to all those on the call. I'm also sorry to interrupt you guys, but a reporter has just contacted me that she cannot get into the call with an outlet that's not represented, so I need somebody to --- a couple of people to knock off the call, please. Those who are redundant.

MS. FITZGERALD: Okay. DoDEA employees who are on the line, can we ask those to drop off, other than those who are in the room with me? Thank you.

MS. HOLD: Thanks, everybody.

MR. SELBY: That's one, that's two. Okay, so let's move on to Linda Curtis. Did you have a question?

MS. CURTIS: None at this time, thank you.

MR. SELBY: Roger that. And Anna Maria?

MS. WHITE: Thank you. I have a question kind of extending this. Are there any recommendations or has there been any thought to offering recommendations for parents who may have childcare issues on the furlough days in September? Or is there an opportunity to partner with some of the on-base childcare services to allow for parents to access childcare on those days?

MS. FITZGERALD: That's a great question. Certainly, I think in each of our communities our principles will help our families look for opportunities to provide care for the children. I think they'll be a valuable resource because they know the communities well and they probably understand where these situations -- these childcare opportunities may occur. If a parent is accustomed to using the

one on base, the DoD childcare center, those childcare centers, I'm sorry, are going to be open during this furlough period. The Secretary has excluded them from the furlough days.

So, on base I don't think you'll have any problem continuing there, it's just a question of trying to make arrangements and partnering outside the gate. So, I think you can find our current childcare centers to be resources, too. They probably --- at the head of those child development centers probably know of opportunities for families.

And certainly, I will raise this to our principles and see if they can be provided --- you know, be a resource for our families.

MS. WHITE: Thank you.

MR. SELBY: And, Nondice. Did you have a question?

MS. THURMAN: No, I don't have any questions at this time.

MR. SELBY: Molly Blake?

MS. BLAKE: Hi, thanks so much. I guess my question is, what were the other alternatives to furloughs? Were there any other options presented besides furloughs, such as facilities, or --- I mean, in addition to that? But I guess my question is, how come it's come down to our students losing valuable education time? And I don't mean to be antagonistic, I'm just ---

MS. FITZGERALD: Absolutely.

MS. HOLROD: Ma'am, before you get going --- I'm sorry to interrupt you. This is Leslie Holrod. Ma'am, the caller who just asked that question, I would encourage you also to take a look at a transcript on our website from May the 14th. There were two senior Defense officials who conducted a background briefing who explained, I think, to some degree what you're asking on how the Department kind of arrived at this. Obviously as Ms. Fitzgerald said, we wanted to not do furloughs and have taken steps as a Department to try to mitigate furloughs. So, I'm sorry to interrupt Ms. Fitzgerald and I know you wanted to address that, but I would also encourage you to take a look at what those senior Defense officials said.

Thank you, ma'am.

MS. FITZGERALD: Thank you, Leslie. And I appreciate you directing the reporter to that website because I was actually going to refer to the Secretary's letter of March 14 and the transcript may reflect some of his remarks in that

regard. I think it's clear from this letter that the Department considered every possible avenue before deciding to furlough anyone, including our teachers. And I think the fact that --- there are a couple things that come to mind. One, we have a wartime mission to support and we need to ensure that our troops have all the resources they need to conduct their important mission. And so, funding had to be, you know, secured through other organizations and other entities within the Department, and our budgets and the opportunities were just limited in the fact that we had so few months in which to take these furloughs. Again, that was another --- the timing of all of this exacerbated the financial situation for the Department.

The Secretary does acknowledge that every account was looked at, from repair and maintenance --- went down to absolute minimum necessary to ensure the safe operation of our facilities, and many other accounts were looked at and scrutinized carefully before this decision was made. And I think we came to it with great regret in having to furlough anyone, including, I know, the teachers.

I think, again, the Department's decision about the fewer number of furlough days for our nine-month employees recognizes two things. One, the severe crisis this is, because the Department has always placed a high value on education, including the education of our children. They looked at this as an investment and not as an expense, and they continue to ensure that the DoDEA schools, specifically, were funded sufficiently to perform their missions in an extraordinary way and provide an extraordinary education to our children. So, I think it was --- the fact that they even had to do it at all, I think, makes some statement about how difficult the financial situation is for the Department.

And secondly, I think it recognizes how important they believe the education of our children is because we are taking a reduced number of furlough days. Every effort was made to ensure that we would not risk accreditation of our schools, that our children had a full school year of academic credit, and that the testing schedules and all the AP exams and all those kinds of things were able to take place, notwithstanding the --- again, the budgetary shortfalls.

MR. SHELBY: Thank you very much, ma'am. Somebody else joined the call?

MS. RESMOVITZ: Yes. This is Joy Resmovitz with the Huffington Post.

MR. SHELBY: Okay, thank you, Joy. We'll come around to get your question in just a few moments. Jen Hatzog.

MS. FITZGERALD: Oh, she dropped off, I believe.

MR. SHELBY: Okay. And ---

MS. FITZGERALD: Maybe I could use her time to get back to our reporter's question about how much money is saved by furloughing DoDEA nine-month employees. It's about between --- I'm sorry. DoDEA-wide employees. I think the question was on teachers. We didn't have it broken down by that yet. But I can get to you all of DoDEA employees, it's about \$23 million. And I don't have readily available just the teachers. We'll calculate and send that forward.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. SELBY: Okay. And Karen, are you still on the line?

MS. JOWERS: Yes. Most of my questions have been answered, but I did have sort of one down-in-the-weeds question. Don't some teachers choose to be paid on a 12-month basis rather than a 9-month basis?

MS. FITZGERALD: Yes, they do. In fact, the majority of our employees elect to have their pay spread over a 12-month period rather than a 9-month period. But the fact that their pay is spread over that period of time doesn't mean that they're actually employed. So in the case where an employee elects to have their pay spread, they get smaller --- you know, they get fewer dollars in their paycheck per pay period but it's spread out over a longer period of time.

MS. JOWERS: How do you ensure equity between the teachers who get paid on a 9-month basis and the teachers who get paid on a 12-month basis, with the furloughs?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, the equity is the same. Regardless of how their pay is spread, they all will take up to five days of instructional loss, and that loss is calculated at their daily rate of pay.

MS. JOWERS: Okay, so it's the daily --- okay.

MS. FITZGERALD: Yeah.

MR. SELBY: And, Joy. Go ahead and ask your question.

MS. RESMOVITZ: Oh, I'm just here to listen because I wasn't able to get on earlier. So I don't want to ask --- I guess, is there anything --- not necessarily to take anybody else's time, but is there anything you said that you think is most important that I should make sure to know?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, that --- I think if I --- and perhaps it's certainly worth, I think, repeating here. That the entire DoD leadership and --- including the Secretary himself --- deeply regrets that a furlough was necessary for any employee, including our teachers. And we certainly understand the impact it has on our morale and our mission, and every effort is being made at all levels in the Department --- I can certainly speak to that --- that will help minimize the impact on our students.

And as I said to our others reporters, teaching and learning is our business, and we are going to do everything we can to minimize the impact for our students. That is our focus, that is our primary goal, and that's going to occur at every position in DoDEA and every level of the organization. All efforts are being dedicated to ensuring that, again, there is minimal impact for our students.

And then the other thing that perhaps you might have missed is that to visit our website, both the DoDEA website and each individual school website. If you want to know about the exact dates of furlough. But the DoDEA website is pretty comprehensive and it will provide updates regularly on --- around the furlough and other budgetary matters that might be related to it. And the individual school sites will have the exact days of a furlough. But in all cases, no furlough days at the school level for our students and for our teachers would occur before September.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, ma'am. Joy, just so you know, I will have an audio file of this whole roundtable ---

MS. RESMOVITZ: Oh, great.

MR. SELBY: --- later on today. It'll be up on our blog, so I'll shoot you that e-mail with that link. My pleasure.

Ma'am, we did receive a question via e-mail from Brittany Friedman, and she would like to know how furloughs and budget cuts will affect sports programs at Fort Campbell schools. She had heard some sports are being cancelled altogether. Can you comment on that?

MS. FITZGERALD: I don't know specifically at Fort Campbell. There may be some rescheduling that has to be done in September if there is a sporting event on a day of a furlough, but our principles are trying to select days to avoid that. And the practicing and any events that occur, they generally occur after the school day. And even on a furlough day, the outside of school activities, such as a sporting event or a practice or a co-curricular activity, like a math club or homework club, they all can continue as long as they don't occur during a school day, which is when the teachers and coaches might be furloughed.

But I'd be happy to look into the Fort Campbell situation for you. Fort Campbell has not posted its days yet. So, but we can confirm that for you.

MR. SELBY: Okay, thank you.

MS. FITZGERALD: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: Now, we're going to go back around to everybody again. But before we do so, was there anybody that's on the call that has not had the chance to ask a question that would like to? (Pause) Okay ---

MS. HOLROD: Mr. Selby, this is Leslie Holrod. I'm sorry to interrupt. Before we go back around the horn, Ms. Fitzgerald, the Date and Daily News submitted a question via e-mail?

MS. FITZGERALD: Okay.

MS. HOLROD: If I can pose that please, ma'am? He writes, Wright Patterson Air Force Base has a highly-popular Star Base program that has educated thousands of fifth graders over the years on STEM topics. Recently, local officials were concerned the program will be eliminated because Department of Defense funding ends this fiscal year. Can you address whether the Department of Defense will continue to fund Star Base in fiscal 2014? Or whether the program will be canceled at Wright Patterson and other bases across the country? This is submitted, ma'am, by Mr. Barry Barber with the Date and Daily News.

MS. FITZGERALD: Okay. I can't really speak to it because DoDEA doesn't operate the Star Base program. I can certainly offer to get him information about it, and we'll be happy to do that.

MS. HOLROD: If you have information, if you would please get it to Mr. Selby. He can get it to Mr. Barry and the others on the call.

MS. FITZGERALD: I will do that.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, ma'am. And back around to Venita.

MS. JENKINS: I have no other questions.

MR. SELBY: Roger that. Tom?

MR. GOERING: I don't have any questions, either. Again, thank you very much.

MR. SELBY: Adrienne?

MS. ANDERSON: No questions.

MR. SELBY: And Chuck?

MR. SIMMINS: Yes. The DoDEA website talks about telework. How will the furlough affect your employees that are engaged in telework?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, they're not exempt from the furlough, and in fact we're canceling all alternative work schedules. And so, those who telework are part of the workforce. And so, they will have to take furlough days as well. And these are, again, probably our above school-level employees because we have little teleworking going on at the school level.

MR. SIMMINS: You're canceling alternative work schedules. Does that mean that all your employees are now going to be in the office working 9-5 or whatever?

MS. FITZGERALD: Telework can still occur because telework is a day of work. These would be the alternative work schedules where you might have four days or you might have --- and one day off a week, or one day off every other week. Employees can take their furlough days on those days that had been their alternative work schedule days off, but during furlough you cancel all of the alternative work schedules.

MR. SIMMINS: Thank you.

MS. FITZGERALD: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And, Amy?

MS. BUSHATZ: Yeah, I just had a clarification. Earlier you said that we shouldn't expect to see those days posted until next week, but then just a few minutes ago you said that Fort Campbell hadn't posted theirs yet, which made me think that some places had, and so ---

MS. FITZGERALD: No, they had not. I'm sorry if I wasn't clear. They had not posted. I was not aware that Fort Campbell had posted its furlough days.

Yes.

MS. BUSHATZ: Okay, so you're saying --- will DoDEA put out, perhaps, a press release or something when school starts to post those furlough days? I mean, how will we know that that's occurring as folks are interested?

MS. FITZGERALD: Our plan now is to ensure that every principle posts the information on the local website. Parents first, and intuitive reactions are to go to the school website. So our direction has been to post it on the website and then certainly put it out in newsletters and any other communications that they use to communicate with parents.

We will link to those sites. You can go to the DoDEA website, click on a school, and you'll be able to see the schedule. So, yes. Both websites will have it. The main DoDEA website by hyperlinking to the school's website. I would encourage that for our parents, that the primary source of communication be at the school level.

MS. BUSHATZ: So, (inaudible) you're saying that next week we should visit the DoDEA website for more (inaudible).

MS. FITZGERALD: Absolutely.

MS. BUSHATZ: I can't visit the school website for every school in the, you know ---

MS. FITZGERALD: Sure.

MS. BUSHATZ: --- every school on the planet.

MS. FITZGERALD: Yes. As we get those dates, we'll be posting them on our website.

MS. BUSHATZ: Thank you.

MS. FITZGERALD: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And, Steve, did you have another question? Steve Beardsley?

MR. BEARDSLEY: Yeah, hi. Just a couple quick ones. Just to make sure, this is the final proposal that we have? Because we've gone from 22 to 14 and now 11/5. The five looks like it?

MS. FITZGERALD: Yes.

MR. BEARDSLEY: The second one is, as the principles are 10-1/2-month employees. How will they be affected by furloughs?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, we believe --- the notice that our teachers have today, the advanced notice of proposed furlough, which indicates up to five days furlough, is the latest news. So, there is no other notice that we are planning on giving. The Secretary's notice of May 14th indicated that we all --- other employees who were not exempt would be taking a furlough --- proposing a furlough of up to 11 days. That has not changed and that guidance still remains correct. So, I would say we all have the latest and you, perhaps, have the latest if you're looking at the Secretary's May 14th letter and any of the proposed notices that we gave our 9-month employees earlier this week.

The second part of your question was --- Jeez, I forgot, I'm so sorry.

MR. BEARDSLEY: The principles.

MS. FITZGERALD: I'm so sorry. They have not been excluded from up to an 11-day furlough. So, all other employees will be taking up to an 11-day furlough.

MR. BEARDSLEY: And then real quick, one more. We talked a little bit about the possible exemptions and the reply process that employees get once they receive notice of furloughs. You sort of touched on this, but my understanding is those reasons for exemptions, they must be personal reasons. You're not going to say certain things, such as special education or, you know, sort of those kinds of areas would be more prone for an exemption than others? It must be sort of a personal thing or what?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, it's based on an individual employee case. So, I can't speak to what those reasons might be. The deciding official may rely upon and decide to mitigate the five days in some way. But it's certainly --- the relief would be provided in individual employee cases, not by categories of employees.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Okay.

MS. HOLROD: Sir, I would also --- this is Leslie Holrod, I'm sorry to interrupt. I would also submit that you may want to take a look at that transcript from those senior Defense officials. One of those officials addressed that because that was posed during the press briefing. And his --- my takeaway from his

comments were that what will guide those deciding officials' decisions will be how the justification marries up against the guiding principles of the exemptions by the Department, if that makes sense. You know, there are overriding or overarching categories of exemptions, and so how does that person kind of fit into one of those categories? If they think they should have been in one of those categories, they need to make that justification.

Ms. Fitzgerald, is that your understanding as well?

MS. FITZGERALD: That's correct, yes. Yes.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Okay, thank you.

MS. HOLROD: But, sir, I would encourage you to take a look at the senior Defense official who said it far more eloquently than I just did.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much. And going to Linda Did you have any questions at this time?

SPEAKER: No questions but, Mr. Shelby, I'd like to confirm that no sports are being cancelled at Fort Campbell or any of the other schools?

MS. FITZGERALD: Again as I said, that there may be some adjustments in this schedule. And that would be --- the principle will know how these furlough days should be taken. And again, our principles are trying to avoid the cancellation of any projects or any --- I'm sorry, any sporting events. So, the goal will be to minimize the impact and, again, all the activities can occur after school.

MR. SELBY: Did you get that, ma'am? (Pause)

SPEAKER: Mr. Selby, this is Elaine. We can go on to the next person.

MR. SELBY: Roger that. And Anna Maria?

MS. WHITE: Yes, hi, thank you. My last question is, do we have an estimate as to how many students will be affected by these five furlough days in September? And if they are elementary, secondary, both, et cetera?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, all of our --- the approximately 84,000 children will be affected in all grades, pre-kindergarden through grade 12.

MS. WHITE: And that's mostly also (inaudible), correct? But this ---

MS. FITZGERALD: No. The children are in the DoD schools and there are 194 schools around the world. The majority of our children are in our overseas area. We have about 24,000 children who are in our U.S. schools.

MS. WHITE: And the furloughs apply equally to all of the DoDEA schools around the world?

MS. FITZGERALD: That's correct.

MS. WHITE: Thank you.

MR. SELBY: And, Nondice?

MS. THURMAN: It's really the only question I would have, still kind of with this Fort Campbell that's been brought up a couple of times, and then DoDEA. If I want a specific answer on how it may affect our school programs, would it be the principle or the superintendent that I would need to talk to?

MS. FITZGERALD: The principle.

MS. THURMAN: Okay.

MR. SELBY: Thank you. And, Molly?

MS. BLAKE: I don't have any questions at this time, thank you so much.

MR. SELBY: You're welcome. Jen?

SPEAKER: She's gone.

MR. SELBY: Okay. Oh, I'm sorry. Karen?

MS. JOWERS: No more questions right now. Thank you very much.

MR. SELBY: You're welcome. Joy?

MS. RESMOVITZ: I'm good, thanks so much.

MR. SELBY: And did anybody else have any more questions?

SPEAKER: I have one additional question. You just said ask individual principles. So Fort Campbell, for example, has a variety of schools on post. They

have high schools, they have middle schools. Will the furlough days be the same across the post or based on each individual school to mitigate --- let's say a working parent has three kids in three different schools with three different furlough days. That's 15 days they have to worry about and think about. What (inaudible) posts or individual schools?

MS. FITZGERALD: Yes. Our schools are working to have the same furlough days in the community, to avoid just exactly what you said. So, our advice has been and our guidance to them has been to be consistent where they can throughout the base. Now, there may be an exception or two. There might be something occurring on a special day and they don't want to re-schedule it, so I don't want to say that that possibility might not exist in any one of our schools, but the goal is to try and have the consistency throughout the community.

SPEAKER: Thank you so much.

MS. FITZGERALD: You're welcome

MR. SELBY: Anybody else with follow-ups?

MR. BEARDSLEY: Yeah, hi. This is Steve again. I had two more quick questions. One, did you say that daycare will be available on furlough days on post?

MS. FITZGERALD: That's correct. The Secretary gave an exception to our child development centers, and so they will be open.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Okay. When was that decision made?

MS. FITZGERALD: May 14th, the Secretary of Defense issued a letter announcing his decision of the need to furlough. And Leslie, I think you said it's also on the DoD website?

MS. HOLROD: Yes. Actually, Mr. Selby, can you do me a favor, please?

MR. SELBY: Yes, ma'am.

MS. HOLROD: At the end of this call can you e-mail both transcripts from the 14th, the one --- and all of the notices that we put out on the 14th, as well as where folks on this call can find the audio file and the transcript of this call, please, sir?

MR. SELBY: Yes, ma'am, I will do that.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Sure, go ahead.

MS. FITZGERALD: And I was just going to say that when the Secretary granted an exception for the child development centers, he did so with the understanding that it would be operating at the minimal level necessary to maintain their accreditation and quality care for children of military families.

MR. BEARDSLEY: And then, you said that the furloughs will begin no earlier than September, is that correct? So that means teacher work days, in this case, would not be furlough-able?

MS. FITZGERALD: Well, they are --- teachers can be furloughed on their work days, but for our nine-month employees the furloughs will begin no earlier than September.

MR. BEARDSLEY: Okay.

MS. FITZGERALD: And I want to make that clear because for all other DoDEA employees, the furloughs can begin no earlier than July 8th. The reason we have no earlier than our --- no earlier than September for our 9-month employees is because we need to give our school level employees 30 days advanced notice and they must be in a pay status in that period, and as many of you know we're going to take a break in the summer and we're not working during that time, and some of our schools are getting out as early as the 28th of May. So that's why when we do the calculations we can tell you that in the nine-month level employees and at the school level, furloughs won't begin before September.

But again, it's any teacher work day or it's any day that, you know, children are in school that could be --- it's any pay day is subject to a furlough.

MR. SELBY: Get that, Steve?

MR. BEARDSLEY: Yeah, I did. Thank you very much.

MR. SELBY: Anybody else with follow-ups?

MR. SIMMINS: I've got one more.

MR. SELBY: Go ahead, Chuck.

MR. SIMMINS: For your nine-month employees, all these furlough days

have to be completed by October 1st, the start of the new fiscal year, correct?

MS. FITZGERALD: By September 30th, actually.

MR. SIMMINS: September 30th. So, basically the month of September is the only time you have to furlough them.

MS. FITZGERALD: Indeed. For our --- again, our nine-month school-level employees.

MR. SIMMINS: Okay, thank you.

MS. FITZGERALD: And it's up to five days.

MR. SELBY: Any --- did we have any more follow-ups? Okay. Well, I'd like to thank everybody for joining the call today. Ms. Fitzgerald, if you have a closing statement, you can go ahead with that now.

MS. FITZGERALD: Sure. I would like to assure your readership from wherever you're reporting that as we continue to deal with these budget uncertainties, you can expect DoDEA to stay focused on our mission of educating children. And I have said before and I've said it in my written correspondence that some of you may have seen, but at the end of the day the DoDEA employees are going to look back on this challenging time and we are going to be able to proudly say that, you know, in the face of this great challenge we performed magnificently in all of the positions we have that serve our mission. And you can depend on that kind of spirit, enthusiasm, and dedication to be in the DoDEA workforce.

And so, I want to assure our parents and our students and all our commands and everyone that we serve --- our military members especially, too --- that we have our focus on our mission and we're going to do the right thing by these children each and every day they are with us. As I said before, teaching and learning is our business. We're proud of it, and we do it well, and our DoDEA teachers are especially equipped to deal with this kind of situation. They are very adept at dealing with disruption to the educational program. They know how to make up time, they deal with this every day. DoDEA --- we have about a 31 percent mobility rate, on the average, and they're very skillful at this.

So, we're going to do everything we can to minimize the disruption to our children, and we are going to stay focused on our mission in all of our positions.

MR. SELBY: Everyone, please stay tuned to the DoDEA website and local school sites for specifics in each school location as well, as Ms. Fitzgerald

has said several times today.

Today's program will be available online at dodlive.mil, where you'll be able to access the audio file and a transcript. The transcript will be at some point tomorrow, the audio file I should have up at some point today. We will tweet that out from our DoD Live Twitter, and we'll also put that up on Facebook. And additionally, I'll be sending that link out to each and every one of you that have been on the call.

Ma'am, I just want to thank you again for your time on the call today. And to everybody for your questions, we thank you also. That concludes ---

MS. FITZGERALD: Thank you. And I extend my appreciation to everyone, too. We appreciate the service that you provide in getting information out to our constituency. We're grateful for that.

MS. BLAKE: I actually have a quick question. Is there going to be updates to any of this? And are you guys going to continue hosting these roundtables? They're really helpful.

MR. SELBY: Is this --- I'm sorry.

MS. BLAKE: I certainly would like to be included, or just to request continuation of this series.

MR. SELBY: Who is this?

MS. BLAKE: Sorry. It's Molly from Blue Star Families.

MR. SELBY: Oh, yes. Molly, I will e-mail you information and then get back to you offline, but, yes. We will continue these.

MS. HOLROD: May I just say on behalf of the Department that everybody on this line is welcome to any roundtable that I --- get in touch with Mr. Selby. So, Mr. Selby, put all these people on our list, please.

MR. SELBY: Roger that, ma'am.

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